

**INTER – AGENCY STANDING COMMITTEE – WORKING GROUP
48th MEETING**

13-14 March 2002

at

**WFP Headquarters, Rome
Green Tower, Room 6G19**

**New Agenda for the CAP: Note for the Record –IASC Directors of Emergency Meeting
26 February 2002**

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Objective of Meeting

IASC to share views and develop a common position in response to the DfID concept note of “Improving the Financing and Flows of Humanitarian Assistance”.

Conclusion of general discussion:

- IASC should represent common position to DfID on this proposal. IASC willing to participate in study but greater buy-in from donors is needed. IASC to re-convene post Donor Retreat in Montreux to further elaborate response.
- Recognise need for better statistics gathering and definition of humanitarian assistance.
- IASC welcomes Analysis of Donor Behaviour. This study should be given priority
- Needs assessment study should be conducted later. IASC interested in contributing to this study following implementation of IASC recommendations to improve the CAP

Next Steps for the IASC WG:

1. Internal coordination mechanism to formulate IASC response to the DfID proposed studies.
2. Re-formulation of the key questions and analysis that the study needs to address.
3. Propose framework to elaborate the broad lines of change in humanitarian assistance since 1991 detailing progress in the humanitarian community and behaviour patterns of donors.
4. Review existing IASC guidelines for reporting on financial contributions to projects within the CAP and to humanitarian projects in CAP countries.

Discussion on general position

The DFID proposal grows out of Montreux II Donors Retreat and the Working Group on OCHA where recommendations were to study humanitarian aid flow problems from the supply end. Donor funding has created discrepancies in funding among emergencies, sectors, etc. This concept note has gone away from the original question. Suggest that the IASC request a re-focus of the study on donor funding (multi-donor study on financing of aid flows).

The studies are not an end in their own right. They intend to lead to another proposal, which suggests a redesign of the current humanitarian system. Does the IASC have an opinion on this general direction? IASC may wish to suggest to DfID to explore re-design of system, but on the assumption that the current mechanisms (such as the CAP) be supported throughout this process.

GA Resolution 46/182 continues to be the guiding principles for humanitarian action and this implies support for CAP. IASC may wish to promote a greater sense of **accountability** on all concerned actors. Coordination among donors may still be improved. There is a need for a clear picture of humanitarian need and availability of resources (in particular studies on donor behaviour). Volume of assistance and donor behaviour should be examined in tandem with quality of assistance and commitment to meet basic needs.

The IASC should be the forum to engage with donors on the DfID study. Whether the focal point in the IASC to engage with DfID should be OCHA is still to be discussed.

Ensure analysis of humanitarian system. There has been a reduction of the percentage of overall ODA that has been allocated to multilateral agencies (45% to 30%). Global Humanitarian Assistance study (IASC 2000) showed doubling of humanitarian aid flows, therefore not an overall reduction to humanitarian component of ODA. However, the system still does not have an accurate picture of total humanitarian aid flows. Do major humanitarian actors such as UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF have the same percentage level of funding in 2001 as in 1991? There is more freedom of action and more responsibilities.

The proposed DfID study focuses too narrowly on needs and does not take into account **protection** issues and the need for a rights-based approach. The strict definition of humanitarian fails to take into account the correlation between **failed development** and preparedness measures and the increased **impact of humanitarian crisis** and need for emergency response.

The IASC has invested in **improving the CAP**, but will it significantly improve impact? The assumption is that by improving financing we will improve impact. Does the IASC expect more resources or better allocation?

The studies do not take into account the national and beneficiary perspective. It does not examine whether the problem is lack of resources or a lack of capacity to deliver (problems of access, distribution.)

UNDP noted that the study focuses on assessment and strategic management issues, but study D is a linear study on whether donors should fund or not? While the purpose of the study is on management of funds, UNDP suggests that the study should have two parts a) understanding donor behaviour and b) exploring options and flexibility of allocation of funds.

Study A – Review of Current Humanitarian Financing System

Suggest that this study should be dropped as impact cannot be measured by a desk study. This study does not take into account needs on the ground and impact on beneficiaries.

Should the study go forward, it should be an introductory baseline study. Depart from GA 46/182 and demonstrate opening up of humanitarian action. Analysis should take into account the changed operating environment and include the influence of donors.

Study should recognise that the “reforms” also responded to increased responsibilities of humanitarians to do more, including advocacy for protection of civilians, humanitarian de-mining and mine awareness, small arms, gender issues, IDPs, statelessness, polio eradication campaigns.

Study should illustrate that the CAP has been changed in response to donor requests, but there has been a lack of impact in response to these changes – there has not been a significant effect on funding levels to projects in the CAP.

Study B – Needs assessment in practice

Suggest that this study should be conducted last (if studies can be carried out sequentially). In particular, it should allow time for the IASC to implement recommendations to improve the CAP with regards to joint assessments.

This study is too narrow. While it proposes to study how we assess “basic needs”, a strategy to resource these needs still needs to be developed. The planning cycles of different agencies need to be better reflected. Need more clarity on the methodology of the study.

The focus is too narrowly on basic survival needs rather than “life with dignity” in which humanitarian action is linked to durable solutions. The UN charter is based upon universal rights, and the rights to assistance of populations suffering from humanitarian crisis, not basic needs.

The study brings into question the credibility of UN agencies to assess overall needs, and implies a perception by donors that the UN is not accurately assessing needs and that erroneous needs assessment is creating the imbalances in funding. However, the questions are ambiguous as they include reference to technical aspects of sector assessments (SPHERE), strategic monitoring, and protection issues. The UN has already made progress in developing sector assessments.

IASC could propose to pilot study in one country as case study to see if donors will commit to fund a strategy based upon independent needs assessment. However, a common understanding of “basic needs” would need to be elaborated.

Study C – Quantifying the Volume of Humanitarian Assistance

Study should illustrate volume of humanitarian aid in relationship to the volume and scope of current humanitarian action and the quality of assistance provided. Donors should study volume of aid, and IASC to assist in analysing impact. There has been an increase in responsibilities without a concomitant increase in resources.

There is a need to better define “humanitarian aid” (is the OECD DAC definition acceptable?) and how to track “transition” activities. OCHA FTS can be a basis for this study. This could be a follow-up to the IASC commissioned study on Global Humanitarian

Assistance (2000). However, there was not consensus as to whether this report had provided satisfactory analysis.

Study D - An Analysis of Donor Behaviour

IASC is supportive of this study. However, the IASC seeks donor participation in humanitarian programming, for example in CAP. Donors are thus implicated in strategy, not just funding. The study also needs to illustrate the reasons for donor providing unbalanced funding. There should be an accounting of other factors which affect funding including donor perceptions, donor coordination mechanisms, earmarking, the role of media, foreign policy objectives, and government versus private contributions.

W Cue/OCHA 1 Mar 02

Chair: Nils Kastberg, UNICEF

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